

Chapter 9

Instructional Practice for Grades Six through Eight

As described in the Introduction, in addition to providing history–social science content, teachers must emphasize disciplinary and literacy practices – investigation, close reading, analysis of evidence, and argumentative writing. The Historical and Social Science Analysis Skill Standards, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy), and the California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) guide these practices in history-social science. Educators may also want to consider the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, published in 2013 by the National Council for the Social Studies. All of these resources emphasize the need for students to think, read, and write in a discipline-specific way. The skills noted below are to be learned through, and applied to, the content standards for grades six through eight. They are also to be assessed with the content standards in these grades.

Disciplinary Thinking and Analysis Skills

The Historical and Social Science Analysis Skills and the C3 Framework address the intellectual skills students should learn and apply when engaged in inquiry (utilizing the individual tools of each discipline to investigate a significant question and marshal relevant evidence in support of their own interpretations) in

history-social science courses in grades six through eight. The skills described below are organized by one of the four main social science disciplines: civics/government, economics, geography, and history. However, across all of the disciplines students should understand and frame questions of disciplinary significance that can be answered by research and study.

Civics and Government

When studying civics and government, students explore how people participate in the governing of society. In middle school, these skills include students' abilities to explain and distinguish the powers, roles, and responsibilities of citizens, government, and the media. Students should also be able to explain the relevance of individual perspective, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society. Students analyze ideas and principles that influence social and political systems as well as the powers and limits of those systems. Additionally, students learn how to assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems. Students develop the ability to apply civic virtues and democratic principles in school and community settings. In addition, these civics-related activities can be woven into a variety of classroom content areas:

1. Students analyze rules, laws, and public policies in terms of effectiveness, identified benefits and costs, and weighing and balancing consequences.

2. Students use deliberative discussion including consideration of multiple points of view when making decisions or making judgments about political issues or problems.
3. Students construct arguments and positions on issues using claims and evidence from multiple sources and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments.
4. Students apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to evaluate and plan various actions to address issues and problems in school and community.

Economics

In order to make effective economic decisions, students need to use cost-benefit analysis to understand how individuals, businesses, governments, and societies use human and physical capital, entrepreneurship, and physical, and natural resources to reach their goals. The economic reasoning skills that middle school students need include the ability to explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society. ~~Students learn how to interpret basic indicators of economic performance and use economic reasoning to analyze and influence individual and social issues. conduct cost-benefit analyses of economic and political issues.~~ They should understand that people voluntarily exchange goods and services when both parties expect to gain as a result of the trade, that markets facilitate the production and exchange of goods and services, that there are benefits and costs of government policies and that those benefits and costs affect different individuals and groups differently.

policies that markets facilitate the exchange of goods and services, and that there are benefits and the costs of trade policies. They should learn to interpret basic indicators of economic performance and identify the impact that changes in those indicators have on individuals and groups.

Geography

In studying geography, students explore local characteristics of places and learn about how places connect to each other. Middle-school students' geographic reasoning skills include using maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and their different environmental and cultural features. Students also explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures. They analyze how relationships between humans and environments (including human-induced environmental change and changes in technology) affect settlement and movement, diffusion of ideas and cultural practices, and conflict and cooperation. Additionally, middle school students should be able to identify and explain the relationship between the natural environment and economic growth in a given community or region.

History

Historical thinking is a process of chronological reasoning, which means wrestling with issues of causality, connections, significance, perspectives, and context with the goal of developing credible arguments about the past based on reasoned interpretation of evidence from a variety of primary and secondary

sources in diverse media formats. In middle school, students place events, ideas, and developments in historical context by considering the date, place, and other developments happening at the same time. They evaluate the relevancy, credibility, and utility of a historical source based on information such as author, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose. Students analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras and how and why they have changed over time. Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long-and short-term causal relations. Finally, students detect possible limitations in the historical record and recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

Literacy Skills

The CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History/Social Studies and the California ELD Standards for grades six through eight are a big leap for students as they move from the elementary grades to the middle grades in all disciplines. Argument is introduced at grade six. Students move beyond stating reasons and evidence to tracing and evaluating arguments and claims in texts. They also write their own arguments that are supported with relevant evidence and clear reasoning, rather than simply state their own opinions. The CA ELD Standards also introduce argument at grades six through eight, echoing the growing sophistication of the thinking expected at this level.

111 The CA CCSS Literacy in History/Social Studies Reading and Writing
112 Standards are meant to complement the *History–Social Science Content*
113 *Standards for California Public Schools* and help students grapple with the
114 primary and secondary sources they encounter. At the same time, history–social
115 science teachers also use the CA ELD Standards to determine how to support
116 their ELs in achieving the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the history–social
117 science content standards and curriculum. The literacy standards at grades six
118 through eight make clear the importance of both content and literacy.


English Language Development

Children and youth who are ELs face the unique challenge of learning English as an additional language¹ at the same time as they are learning history–social science content through English². This challenge creates a dual responsibility for all K–12 teachers of ELs. The first responsibility is to ensure that all ELs have full access to the grade-level, intellectually rich history–social science curriculum. The second is to ensure that ELs rapidly develop advanced levels of English in history–social science, the type of English that is necessary for success with academic tasks and texts. To fulfill this dual responsibility, California promotes a comprehensive approach to English language development (ELD) as an integral part of a robust instructional program for all ELs. This approach includes *both* integrated ELD *and* designated ELD³.

¹ The term *English as an additional language* is used intentionally to signal that an explicit goal in California is for ELs to add English to their linguistic repertoires and maintain and continue to develop proficiency in their primary language(s).

² Some ELs are enrolled in alternative bilingual programs where they may be exclusively learning science in their primary language or learning science in both their primary language and English.

³ *Integrated* and *designated* ELD may be unfamiliar terms. These new terms now encompass elements of previously used terms, such as *sheltered instruction*, *SDAIE*, or *dedicated ELD*. It is beyond the scope of this framework to identify all previously used or existing terms, and readers should read the framework carefully to determine how the new terminology reflects or differs from current terms and understandings.

Integrated ELD		Designated ELD
All teachers with ELs in their classrooms use the CA ELD Standards <i>in tandem with</i> the focal CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards.		A protected time during the regular school day in which teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build <i>into and from content instruction</i> in order to develop critical language ELs need for content learning in English.

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120 *Reading*

121 In grades six through eight, the reading strand of the CCSS presents rigorous
 122 concepts of evidence, argumentation, and integration and analysis of multiple
 123 sources and perspectives. The reading standards for literacy in history/social
 124 studies direct students to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of
 125 primary and secondary sources. They expect students to be able to determine
 126 central ideas, information, or conclusions in a text and provide summaries of
 127 what they've read. Students must be able to describe how a text presents
 128 information and identify aspects of text that reveal author's point of view. They
 129 must be able to distinguish among facts, reasoned judgments, and opinions or
 130 speculation in a text; and analyze the relationship between a primary and
 131 secondary source on the same topic. Providing students with significant inquiry-
 132 based and text-dependent historical questions can guide students to closely read
 133 and analyze primary and secondary documents to meet these standards.
 134 Sources such as biographies, speeches, letters, essays, plays, films, and novels,
 135 both deepen understanding of key historical narratives, ideas, periods, events,
 136 and influential actors and provide evidence for students to answer those inquiry

questions. Literary and informational text can be paired in units that encourage collaboration between English language arts and history–social science courses.

The CA ELD Standards intersect with and amplify these CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy. English learners in grades six through eight explain ideas, phenomena, processes and relationships based on close reading of texts, making inferences and drawing conclusions. They evaluate and analyze language choices, explaining how writers and speakers use language to present ideas and claims that are well supported by evidence.

It is important that students who are experiencing difficulty with reading are supported as they learn from texts; **teachers should not avoid texts as sources of knowledge with students who find them challenging and rely exclusively on non-text media and experiences. Replacing texts with other sources of information or rewriting them in simpler language—in spite of the intention to ensure access to the curricula—limits students’ skill to independently learn with texts in the future.** In other words, instruction should be provided to enable all students to learn with texts alongside other learning experiences.

Writing

As students advance through the middle school grades, they become increasingly effective at expressing themselves through different genres of writing. In grades six through eight, they build on previous learning to write more complex and cohesive texts of different types for various purposes continuing to develop and organize their writing in a way that is appropriate to the task,

purpose, and audience. They engage in planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach in their writing. They continue to write routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

In history–social science and the other content areas, students begin writing arguments about discipline-specific content by introducing claims and distinguishing them from opposing claims, supporting claims logically and with relevant and accurate data and evidence, and establishing and maintaining a formal style. They also write informative/ explanatory texts, including narration of historical events and processes, using relevant, well-chosen facts and appropriate and varied transitions. Students also establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.

The CA ELD Standards advocate students writing arguments collaboratively and independently in longer and more detailed informational texts. All students, especially ELs, benefit from a focus on making choices about how to use language in their writing for clarity, precision, and variety, adapting their choices to be appropriate for the task, purpose, and audience. For example, students learn to express attitudes and opinions or temper statements with nuanced modal expressions and use grade-appropriate general academic words and domain-specific words and phrases. They also develop their understandings about how English works to make meaning via structuring cohesive texts, expanding and enriching ideas, and connecting and condensing ideas in writing. As do all students, ELs in middle school work their way towards full proficiency in

English by becoming increasingly conscious about the language choices they make to express their ideas in writing. In other words, they learn to make intentional choices about particular language resources (e.g., cohesive devices, grammatical structures, vocabulary) in order to illustrate their understanding of content.

Research

Opportunities to engage in research contribute to students' history-social science content knowledge. The grade span skills for building content knowledge through research call for students to conduct short research projects to answer a question and generate additional related, focused questions for further research or that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. These tasks demand that students gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility of sources, quote or paraphrase data and conclusions of others, avoid plagiarism, provide basic bibliographic information, use search terms effectively, and follow a standard format for citation. Students also apply the previously described grade level reading and writing skills and standards to conduct this research.

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